

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 985

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Andy Berke on his appointment as Special Representative for Broadband, National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should specially recognize those Tennesseans who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves in public service to their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable individual is Andy Berke of Chattanooga, an outstanding Tennessean, who was recently appointed to serve as Special Representative for Broadband, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); and

WHEREAS, located within the U.S. Department of Commerce, the NTIA is the executive branch agency principally responsible by law for advising the president on telecommunications and information policy issues; and

WHEREAS, before joining the NTIA in January 2022, Andy Berke served as Mayor of Chattanooga from 2013 to 2021; and

WHEREAS, as mayor, Mr. Berke streamlined the city's government with a top to bottom reorganization that eliminated three departments and saved taxpayer dollars in the process; the Berke Administration relentlessly focused on making Chattanooga streets safer and families stronger, growing middle class jobs, and using taxpayer dollars efficiently; and

WHEREAS, under Mayor Berke's leadership, Chattanooga took bold steps to further harness the unique advantage of having fast, cheap, and pervasive internet service; following a robust public engagement process, Chattanooga established an Innovation District of 140 acres in the heart of downtown that houses a mix of start-up businesses, incubators, and accelerators alongside investors and public amenities; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the city partnered with various nonprofits, businesses, and county government to launch Tech Goes Home, a program honored for Digital Inclusion Leadership by the National League of Cities and Google; at the end of his term, Mr. Berke led a partnership to provide high-speed broadband at no cost to every family with a child on free or reduced lunch, making Chattanooga the first community in the country with such a benefit; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Andy Berke was named Municipal Leader of the Year by *American City and County* magazine and City Executive of the Year by State Scoop; he was presented with the Digital Inclusion Award from Next Century Cities in 2017 and was named Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance in 2020; and

WHEREAS, prior to his service as Mayor of Chattanooga, Andy Berke served in this august body as the State Senator for the 10th Senatorial District in the 105th, 106th, and 107th General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, as a Senator, Mr. Berke served as the Vice Chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus and as a member of the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Transportation and Safety Committee; and

WHEREAS, in appreciation of his exemplary public service, Andy Berke was honored as the Outstanding Senator of the Year by the County Officials Association of Tennessee and as the Southeast Tennessee Development District's Legislator of the Year in 2010; he was honored by the Tennessee PTA as the 2012 Legislator of the Year and as the Tennessee Education Association's 2012 Friend of Education; and

WHEREAS, in his new role as Special Representative for Broadband for the NTIA, Mr. Berke will work to help states and territories connect and prepare and take advantage of an influx of \$48.5 billion in new federal funds to help make broadband more accessible and affordable to underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Andy Berke is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the Volunteer State, and he should be specially recognized for his sterling service to the people of Chattanooga and the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Andy Berke on his appointment as Special Representative for Broadband, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, commend him for his countless contributions and many good works as a public servant, and extend to him our best wishes for continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.